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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, FBI, AND FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LAW  
ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE "PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD" TO  
TARGET CHILD SEXUAL PREDATORS**

SACRAMENTO/FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott, FBI Special Agent in Charge Drew Parenti, California Department of Justice Director of Division of Law Enforcement Rick Oules, California District Attorneys Association President Gerald Shea, and area law enforcement officials announced today the roll-out of Project Safe Childhood (PSC) within the 34 counties of the Eastern District of California, pledging their full support to work collaboratively to target sex offenders who prey on children. PSC is a national initiative unveiled earlier this year by United States Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

In announcing the work of Project Safe Childhood for the 34-county Eastern District of California, United States Attorney McGregor Scott stated, "Federal, state, and local law enforcement must work together if we are going to score significant victories in finding online predators and locking them away from our children. Project Safe Childhood will help law enforcement and community leaders prevent, investigate, and prosecute sexual predators and pornographers who target our children."

FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Sacramento Division Drew Parenti stated, "The public needs to know law enforcement agencies will work together to protect their children and will charge those who would exploit and abuse them."

Project Safe Childhood is designed to increase federal prosecutions of violent sexual predators and to reduce incidences of Internet crimes against children, including child pornography trafficking. In this nationwide initiative, the United States Attorney's Office has teamed with federal, state, and local agencies to enhance law enforcement presence on the Internet. Additionally, efforts are underway to reach out to community groups and schools in order to inform parents and their children on how to use the Internet wisely and safely, thereby reducing the chances they fall prey to online sexual predators. PSC seeks to build upon its ongoing efforts to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. The core elements of the initiative, include

- 1) Integrated federal, state, and local efforts to investigate and prosecute child exploitation cases and to identify and rescue child victims;
- 2) Participation by PSC partners in coordinated national initiatives and investigations;
- 3) Increased federal involvement in the investigation and prosecution of child pornography and enticement cases;
- 4) Training of federal, state, and local law enforcement; and
- 5) Community awareness and educational programming.

As part of PSC, agents and law enforcement officers in the Eastern District of California recently conducted a three-day operation dubbed "Operation Valley Predator," targeting convicted sex offenders to determine if each was in compliance with sex registration requirements. During the operation, teams of law enforcement officers from more than 80 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the Central Valley made contact with 647 individuals, conducted 548 searches, and arrested 138 persons on a variety of offenses ranging from possession, receipt, distribution and production of child pornography, to failing to comply with state-mandated sex registration statutes.

Of the 135 persons arrested during Operation Valley Predator, approximately two dozen have been indicted on federal child exploitation charges, with the remainder subject to potential state prosecution by local district attorneys. Some cases may warrant both state and federal prosecutions

Agencies participating in Operation Valley Predator included: the Federal Bureau of Investigation; United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement; the United States Postal Inspection Service; the United States Secret Service; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the United States Marshal's Service; the California Highway Patrol; the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; the California Department of Justice; California State Parole; the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force; the Police Departments of Sacramento, Redding, Fresno, Clovis, Modesto, Davis, Elk Grove, Red Bluff, Corning, Stockton, Chico, Gridley, Paradise, Lodi, Yuba City, Merced, Newman, Oakdale, Turlock, Manteca, Tracy, Weed, Yreka, Anderson, South Lake Tahoe, Grass Valley, and Nevada City; the Sheriff's Departments of Sacramento, Fresno, Butte, Siskiyou, Shasta, Stanislaus, Amador, Calaveras, San Joaquin, Merced, Tulare, Kern, Yolo, El Dorado, Placer, Nevada, Plumas, Tehama, and Tuolumne Counties; the District Attorney Offices of Fresno, Shasta, Butte, Yolo, Nevada, Placer, Siskiyou, Calaveras, Merced, San Joaquin, Amador, Tuolumne, and Stanislaus Counties; the Probation Offices of Nevada, Calaveras, Sacramento, Shasta, San Joaquin, Fresno, Tehama, Siskiyou, and Butte Counties; and the Ceres Public Safety Department.

The United States Attorney's Office has also partnered with the California Coalition for Children's Internet Safety, a cyber-safety effort initiated by the California Department of Consumer Affairs that teams private industry with government and not-for-profit agencies in an

effort to host informational forums throughout the state for parents and youth to learn more about smart and safe Internet use.

Last week, United States Attorney Scott and a law enforcement team met with educators and parents in Nevada County for the first of a series of community forums designed to increase public awareness of the dangers associated with unbridled Internet use by children, and to encourage Nevada County School administrators to include Internet safety training in the schools. Stressing the importance of Internet education, Scott asked, "We teach our kids how to use the Internet, but do we teach them how to protect themselves?" Outreach will continue in other communities and school districts throughout California's Eastern District in an effort to encourage schools to make Internet safety programs a part of their curriculum.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit the PSC website at [www.projectsafchildhood.gov](http://www.projectsafchildhood.gov) or call the Project Safe Childhood coordinators for the Eastern District of California, Assistant United States Attorney Laurel White, in Sacramento (916-554-2700), or Assistant United States Attorney David Gappa, in Fresno (559-497-4000).

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